1:Gordon E-4, 5 (no date) 1907 AR7 Khasi AR7



of anything except iron or steel, the result being that the sword is most awkward to hold, and could never have been of much use as a weapon of offence.

The same spear is used for thrusting and casting. The spear is not decorated with wool or hair like the spears of the Naga tribes, but it is nevertheless a serviceable weapon, and would be formidable in the hand of a resolute man at close quarters. The length of the spear is about 6½ feet. The shaft is generally of bamboo, although sometimes of ordinary wood. The spear heads are forged in the local smithies.

The Khasi weapon *par excellence* is the bow. Although no "British Heads," the Khasis are very fair archers, and they use the bow largely for hunting. The Khasi bow (*ka ryntieh*) is of bamboo, and is about 5 feet in height. The longest bow in use is said to be about the height of a man, the average height amongst the Khasis being about about 5 feet 2 inches to 5 feet 4 inches. The bowstring is of split bamboo, the bamboos that are used being a *spit*, a *shlaw*, and a *sinj-lieh*.

The arrows (*ki khnam*) are of two kinds: (a) the barbed-headed (*ki pliang*), and (b) the plain-headed (*nay*). Both are made out of bamboo. The first kind is used for hunting, the latter for archery matches only. Archery may be styled the Khasi national game. A description of Khasi archery will be found under the heading "Games." The feathers of the following birds are used for arrows:—Vultures, crow, cranes, cormorants, and hornbills. Arrow-heads are made of iron or steel, and are forged locally. The distance a Khasi arrow will carry, short from the ordinary bow by a [illegible] yards. The Khasi shield is circular in shape, of hide, and studded with brass or silver. In former days shields of rhinoceros hide are said to have been used, but nowadays buffalo skin is used. The shields would stop an arrow or turn aside a spear or sword thrust. The present-day shield is used merely for purposes of display.

Before the advent of the British into the hills the Khasis are said to have been acquainted with the art of manufacturing gunpowder, which was prepared in the neighbourhood of Mawsynram, Kyrdoi, and Cherra. The gunpowder used to be

such a way that the notch can be cut directly after a knot. The purpose of the notch is to be able to set the arrow easily on the string. There are two kinds of notches: 411

1. Notches which resemble the curve of a Moorish bow. (14)

14. Illustration II, figs. 5a, 5b.

2. Notches which have an even flatness at the bottom and a point on the left and the right. (15)

15. Illustration II, figs. 6a, 6b.

Relationship of the Cut Surface to the Notch.

The large spear-shaped tips of the hunting arrows ('nam-pliang) are made with the wide flat part at right angles to the notch and thus to the string of the bow. (16)

16. Bruno Adler, op. cit., p. 607.

Markings on the Arrows.

[617] Many arrows (arrows for sport 'nam-sop) are marked with black lacquer from the end of the base of the feathering to the notch, so that the arrows of the teams can be told apart in shooting competitions. (17) [526]

17. Illustration II, fig. 6a.

Feathering the Arrows 411 237

The Khasi have two ways of feathering:
1. Radial sewn feathering.
2. Tangential tied feathering.

411 237 Ad 1. Radial sewn feathering is the common method. Feathers are taken from geese, cranes, cormorants, Buluwar vultures and the horn bird. The feathers of the carrion vultures are used less often as they are brittle. The feathers are split along the quill (shaft), cut on the top and on the bottom and sewn onto the base. At one end the feathers are 4 millimeters wide, on the other end (towards the notch) 8 millimeters wide. The split quill is 5 centimeters, the outer flags of the feathers 7 to 8 centimeters.

411 237 531 The base consists of tinfoil and is divided variously. A strip of tinfoil (not colored) alternates with a strip of tinfoil colored red. Thus the bases have a red tinfoil strip in the middle and two red ones at each end. Or there are three in the middle and at the ends two or three red strips of tinfoil. The space in between is filled out with uncolored tinfoil (silver). The red strips of tinfoil are two millimeters wide. (18)

18. Illustration II, fig. 6a.

There are also bases of leather which is cut very fine and gilded. As in the examples just mentioned red strips of tinfoil alternate with the base that is not colored; similarly, uncolored strips of leather alternate with the gilded base. The uncolored strips of leather are 7 millimeters wide. (19)

19. Illustration II, fig. 7a.

The feathers which have been cut properly are now sewn onto the bases with uncolored natural silk, in a spiral form, (20), although

20. Illustration II, fig. 4

lightly. The stitches are made exactly and evenly throughout. Figures 7b and 8b of illustration II, though greatly enlarged show how the silken threads are put on. With a base 5 centimeters long the number of stitches is 22 to 24, with bases of 7.5 the number of stitches is 29 to 31. 411 237 531

The feathers are at right angles to the split quill on the shaft and are sewn on five together, more rarely three together.

On the underside of the base (towards the tip of the arrow) black colored pitch is smeared, to unite the cut off feather ends to the shaft of the arrow. (21)

21. Illustration II, figs. 7a, 8a.

[611] Ad. 2. Tied tangential feathering is only used still on children's arrows ('nam-phiah). A completely uncut feather is fastened lengthwise on the end of the arrow by silk or bast and the join is smeared with pitch. 111 237

Hunting arrows and arrows for sport are also used unfeathered (hunting arrows especially in the neighborhood of Lamin) and are then simply called 'nam, but if they are feathered they are called 'nam-pur. 411 526

The target is made of the soft wood of a root and is called ka soh-pdung by the Khasi. A piece of wood about 8 to 10 centimeters wide and 50 centimeters long is cut from the root, smoothed on the front side and pointed somewhat towards the ground, so that the whole thing resembles a relatively wide but short lath. This target is set up by putting the somewhat pointed end into the earth and placing two bamboo sticks behind as braces, so that the target cannot be tipped

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There is considerable trade carried on in
845 *nipát* or bay leaves, the trees being extensively cultivated by the
439 inhabitants of the lower slopes of the hills on the Sylhet border. The finest oranges in India are also grown in groves in the same tract, the value of the trade in which is now (1876) estimated to amount
• 237 to £3760 per annum. Lac is gathered by the Mikirs in the Jáintiá
439 Hills, but not to any great extent. Bees are both domesticated
231 and found wild, and an extensive trade in bees-wax is carried on, the amount exported being estimated at from three hundred to four hundred *mannds* annually. The whole of the Hills, where there is
233 no forest, and where the land is not under cultivation, consists of
621 rich pasture grounds, which are held in common by the villagers
651 and pay no revenue to Government.

137 The forests of the Khási and Jáintiá Hills do not yield much profit either to the British Government or to the chiefs. There
[648] are no reserved forests in the District; and according to the Deputy-
[659] Conservator, the total area of unreserved forest, *i.e.* of land covered with timber trees and not at present required for *jhúm* cultivation, is only 150 square miles. The trees found are chiefly pine, and these classified as 'mixed upper hill forests.' At an elevation of 3000 feet, the Pinus Kasia predominates over all other vegetation and forms almost pure pine forests. It is found also at lower heights, and there attains larger dimensions, but only in the case of isolated trees. The 'mixed upper hill forests' are confined to a series of sacred groves, which clothe the topmost ridge of the watershed between the valleys of the Brahmaputra and Surmá. The characteristic trees are those of a temperate vegetation, chiefly consisting of oaks, chestnuts, magnolia, Schima, Cinnamomum, Prunus, Engelhardtia, etc. There are also numerous other timber trees, including the valuable *sál* (Shorea robusta) and the rubber tree (Ficus elastica); but on the whole the Khási Hills are remarkable for the
[648] fewness of forests. Early in 1874-75 measures were taken to put a
[659] stop to the indiscriminate burning of the forests, and the Siems and village officers were made responsible for the conservancy of the sacred groves. These endeavours have met with some success; but it is a very difficult thing to change the habits of a population, or to induce uncivilised tribes to incur a small temporary inconvenience for the sake of future benefit. The total area directly protected from fire during the year 1875-76 is returned at 3618 acres; the expenditure was Rs. 122; and in two prosecutions for breaches of forest rules, twenty-three persons were convicted.